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THE FLOWER OF PEACE





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TO LADY GROSVENOR
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St. Francis to the Birds

Giotto pinx.

A decorative border with a repeating floral and scrollwork pattern surrounds the central text area.

THE
FLOWER
of Peace

A Collection of the
Devotional Poetry of
KATHARINE
TYNAN

"If thou can'st get but thither
There grows the Flower of Peace,
The Rose that cannot wither,
Thy Fortress and thine Ease."
HENRY VAUGHAN.

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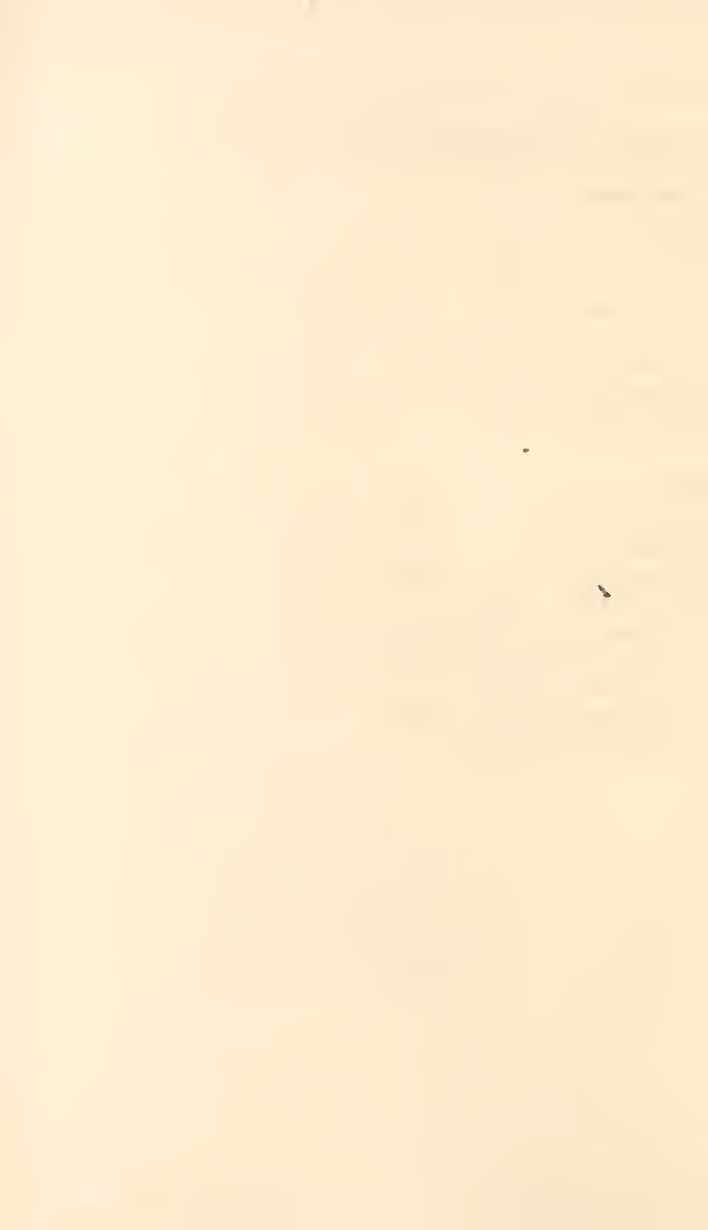
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BOOK I



A

THE FLOWER OF PEACE

B O O K I

“ADVENIAT REGNUM TVVM”

Thy kingdom come ! Yea, bid it come.
But when Thy kingdom first began
On earth, Thy kingdom was a home,
A child, a woman, and a man.

The child was in the midst thereof,
O, blessed Jesus, holiest One !
The centre and the fount of love,
Mary and Joseph's little Son.

Wherever on the earth shall be
A child, a woman, and a man,
Imaging that sweet trinity
Wherewith Thy kingdom first began,

Establish there Thy kingdom ! Yea,
And o'er that trinity of love
Send down, as in Thy appointed day,
The brooding spirit of Thy Dove !

AN OLD SONG RE-SUNG

I saw three ships a-sailing,
A-sailing on the sea,
The first her masts were silver,
Her hull was ivory.
The snows came drifting softly,
And lined her white as wool ;
Oh, Jesus, Son of Mary,
Thy cradle beautiful !

I saw three ships a-sailing,
The next was red as blood.
Her decks shone like a ruby,
Encrimsoned all her wood.
Her main-mast stood up lonely,
A lonely Cross and stark.
Oh, Jesus, Son of Mary,
Bring all men to that ark !

I saw three ships a-sailing,
The third for cargo bore
The souls of men redeemèd,
That shall be slaves no more.
The lost belovèd faces,
I saw them glad and free.
Oh, Jesus, Son of Mary,
When wilt Thou come for me ?

THE CHRISTMAS BABE

ALL in the night when sleeping
I lay in slumber's chain,
The Christmas Babe came weeping
Outside my window-pane.
The Christmas Child whom faithless
Men turn from their hearthstone—
My dream was dumb and breathless,
The Christmas Babe made moan.

The small hands beat impatient
Upon my close-locked door.
The small hands they have fashioned
The world, the stars, and more.
He heard no sound of coming,
His cries broke wild and keen :
The Christmas Babe went roaming
For one to take Him in.

A burning bush of splendour
Enfolds the Christmas Child,
Like some meek bird and tender
In gold thorns undefiled.
I listen long to hear Him
Come crying at my door.
Voices of night I fear them,
And He comes by no more.

THE FIRST NOWELL

WAS the Heaven dark then,
Robbed of its light,
When little Jesus came to men
On a Christmas night ?

Was it dark and dead ?
Yea, lonesome to see :
All for the little golden head
That lay on Mary's knee.

Certes, Heavenly folk
Fled after Him where
He lay amid the harmless flock
In the stable bare.

Certes, stars likewise
Trooped from the sky,
And when He oped His lovely eyes
Sang Lullaby.

Certes, Heaven was dim,
Its lights all fled away.
Yea, Cherubim and Seraphim
Knelt in the hay.

Powers, Principalities,
Archangels in a band,
Before the Baby bent their knees,
Kissing His hand,

Who lay so small and soft,
New from His Mother's womb.
Since Heaven was in the cattle's croft
Heaven was in gloom.

ABOUT THE MIDDLE HOUR

ABOUT the middle hour of night,
When Northern streamers fly,
Betwixt day-light and candle-light,
Was heard the Babe's first cry.

The ass said to the ox : Brother,
Right honoured are we twain
Who house the Babe and Babe's Mother
Against the night and rain.

The ox him answered : Yea, brother :
Blessed our grass to yield
To bed the Lord and Lord's Mother,
Who else had lain afield.

O, what is fast, and what is feast
Where such sweet fare is spread ?
The Baby at His Mother's breast,
With her dear milk is fed.

And now : Come kneel with me, brother,
This goodly sight to see.
Before the Child and Child's Mother,
The twain have bent the knee.

And then : Come weep with me, brother,
For stony hearts of men.
For ruth of Babe and Babe's Mother,
Their tears fall down like rain.

With streamers in the Northern skies,
While Bedlam slept in sin,
The Lord hath opened Paradise
And bade the beasts come in.

THE CHRISTMAS BIRD

As I went out a-walking
In the dark of the wood,
I heard a bird talking
Wore a golden hood.

Where he perched in the hollies
It was holy ground.
His cloak of gold feathers
Shed glory around.

I bring you good tidings,
He sang, gentles all,
Christ is born in stable,
To lift men from thrall !

From death and God's anger
By the holly tree !
I bring you good tidings
Of salvation, quoth he.

I bring you good tidings—
He rose like a flame—
Christ is born in Bethlehem
Of a right noble dame.

His body was golden
From the head to the feet,
With Glory in Excelsis
His praise did repeat.

He was neither a linnet,
Nor a robin redbreast :
That was no golden eagle
With a star for crest.

He went singing and soaring
From the holly tree :
I bring you good tidings,
O gentles, quoth he.

As I went out a-walking
In the holly shaw,
I heard a bird talking,
Great glory I saw.

The dark shining holly,
It was splashed with red.
I bring you good tidings
Of a Saviour, he said.

SINGING STARS

“WHAT sawest thou, Orion, thou hunter of the
star-lands,
On that night star-sown and azure when thou
cam’st in splendour sweeping,
And amid thy starry brethren from the near lands
and the far lands
All the night above a stable on the earth thy watch
wert keeping?”

“O, I saw the stable surely, and the young Child
and the Mother,
And the placid beasts still gazing with their mild
eyes full of loving.
And I saw the trembling radiance of the Star, my
lordliest brother,
Light the earth and all the heavens as he kept his
guard unmoving.

“There were kings that came from Eastward with
their ivory, spice, and sandal,
With gold fillets in their dark hair, and gold-
broidered robes and stately ;
And the shepherds, gazing starward, over yonder
hill did wend all,
And the silly sheep went meekly, and the wise
dog marvelled greatly.

“O, we knew, we stars, the stable held our King,
His glory shaded,
That His baby hands were poising all the spheres
and constellations,

Berenice shook her hair down, like a shower of star-
dust braided,
And Arcturus, pale as silver, bent his brows in
adoration.

“The stars sang all together, sang their love-songs
with the angels,
With the Cherubim and Seraphim their shrilly
trumpets blended.
They have never sung together since that night
of great evangels,
And the young Child in the manger, and the time
of bondage ended.”

CHRISTMAS EVE IN IRELAND

Not a cabin in the Glen shuts its door to-night,
Lest the travellers abroad knock in vain and pass,
Just a humble gentleman and a lady bright
And she to be riding on an ass.

Grief is on her goodman, that the inns deny
Shelter to his dearest Dear in her hour of need ;
That her Babe of royal birth, starriest, most high,
Has not where to lay His head.

Must they turn in sadness to the cattle byre
And the kind beasts once again shake the bed for
Him?
Not a cabin in the Glen but heaps wood on the fire
And keeps its lamps a-trim.

Now the woman makes the bed, smooths the linen
sheet,
Spreads the blanket, soft and white, that her
own hands spun.
Whisht! is that the ass that comes, on his four
little feet,
Carrying the Holy One?

Nay, 'twas but the wind and rain, the sand on the
floor.

A bitter night, yea, cruel, for folk to be abroad.
And she, not fit for hardship, outside a fast-closed
door,

And her Son the Son of God!

Is it the moon that's turning the dark world to
bright?

Is it some wonderful dawning in the night and
cold?

Whisht! did you see a shining One and Him to
be clad in light

And the wings and head of Him gold?

Who are then those people, hurrying, hasting,
those,

And they all looking up in the sky this night of
wondrous things?

Oh, those I think be shepherdmen, and they that
follow close

I think by their look be kings.

Not a cabin in the Glen shuts the door till day,
Lest the heavenly travellers come, knock again
in vain.
All the night the dulcimers, flutes, and hautboys
play,
And the angels walk with men.

BOOK II



EPIPHANY

THE Kings have brought Him ambergris,
The Babe, whose one delight it is
 To creep and nest
In the warm snows of Mother's breast.

The Kings have brought him frankincense,
Who hath no need, this Innocence,
 Of aught beside
His Mother's milk in a full tide.

O'er Mother's breast His fingers go,
Constraining that sweet stream to flow,
 So soft and small,
To whom that milky world is all.

The Kings have brought Him gold and myrrh,
This new-born thing whose Heaven's in her ;
 To make His bed
In the sweet place from which He fed.

Myrrh, spikenard, such precious things,
The Kings have brought the King of Kings,
 Who, drunken-deep,
Falls like a full-fed lamb asleep.

THE MAN OF THE HOUSE

JOSEPH, honoured from sea to sea,
This is your name that pleases me,
 "Man of the House."

I see you rise at the dawn and light
The fire and blow till the flame is bright.

I see you take the pitcher and carry
The deep well-water for Jesus and Mary.

You knead the corn for the bread so fine,
Gather them grapes from the hanging vine.

There are little feet that are soft and slow,
Follow you whithersoever you go.

There's a little face at your workshop door,
A little one sits down on your floor :

Holds His hands for the shavings curled,
The soft little hands that have made the world.

Mary calls you : the meal is ready :
You swing the Child to your shoulder steady.

I see your quiet smile as you sit
And watch the little son thrive and eat.

The vine curls by the window space,
The wings of angels cover the face.

Up in the rafters, polished and olden,
There's a Dove that broods and his wings are
golden.

You who kept Them through shine and storm,
A staff, a shelter kindly and warm,

Father of Jesus, husband of Mary,
Hold us your lilies for sanctuary !

Joseph, honoured from sea to sea,
Guard me mine and my own roof-tree,
"Man of the House" !

THE WEEPING BABE

SHE kneels by the cradle
Where Jesus doth lie ;
Singing, Lullaby, my Baby !
But why dost Thou cry ?

The babes of the village
Smile sweetly in sleep ;
And lullaby, my Baby,
That ever dost weep !

I've wrapped Thee in linen,
The gift of the Kings ;
And wool, soft and fleecy,
The kind Shepherd brings.

There's a dove on the trellis,
And wings in the door,
And the gold shoes of Angels
Are bright on our floor.

Then lullaby, my Baby !
I've fed Thee with milk,
And wrapped Thee in kisses
As soft as the silk.

And here are red roses,
And grapes from the vine,
And a lamb trotting softly,
Thy playfellow fine.

Wake up, little Jesus,
Whom naught can defile ;
All gifts will I give Thee
An Thou wilt but smile.

But it's lullaby, my Baby !
And mournful am I,
Thou cherished little Jesus,
That still Thou wilt cry.

MATER DEI

SHE looked to east, she looked to west,
Her eyes, unfathomable, mild,
That saw both worlds, came home to rest,—
Home to her own sweet child.
God's golden head was at her breast.

What need to look o'er land and sea ?
What could the winged ships bring to her ?
What gold or gems of price might be,
Ivory or miniver,
Since God Himself lay on her knee ?

What could th' intense blue heaven keep
To draw her eyes and thoughts so high ?
All heaven was where her Boy did leap,
Where her foot quietly
Went rocking the dear God asleep.

The angel folk fared up and down
A Jacob's Ladder hung between
Her quiet chamber and God's Town.
She saw unawed, serene ;
Since God Himself played by her gown.

THE VISION OF JESUS

"SWEETEST Son, what dost Thou see ?
In Thine eyes groweth the shadow.
Dost Thou weary of earth and me
While we wander in this sweet meadow ?

"Flowers are springing all gold before
My little Son, who shall be my Man ;
Meadow grasses bow to adore
The sweetest flower since the world began.

"Little Jesus that turnest from me,
What dost Thou grieve for, sad and apart !
Thine eyes see something I cannot see ;
Why art Thou mournful, little dear heart ?"

"Mother of mine, I look on a place
And men asleep 'neath a darkling sky ;
One crieth out with a stricken face.
Oh ! Mother, I fear that man is I."

“Thou dream’st, small Son ! Is naught to fear.
Sit and play ’neath the blooming bough.
Here be thine angels, merry and dear.
Thy Father will send Thee guards enow.”

“But, Mother, I see a rabble rout,
And one among them is dragged to die.
‘*Crucifige !*’ the voices shout.
Oh ! Mother, I fear that man is I.”

“Peace, dear Lordkin ; here be Thy birds,
The kid, Thy sweeting, the lamb, the dove ;
Thy Father will send Thee a million swords
Ere any harm Thee, my Baby Love.”

“Oh ! Mother, I see a man of grief
Nailed to a cross on a hilltop high ;
His head is bowed betwixt thief and thief—
Oh ! Mother, I think that man is I.”

“Peace, little Birdkin ; they dare not do it ;
Here runs little John to play with Thee.
Rose of Sharon and Jesse’s Root,
I, Thy Mother, will stay with Thee.”

She kisses her Rose, His hands, His feet,
“It was but dreaming, my Son so small.”
But over her heart, in the noontide heat,
The shadows of three gaunt crosses fall.

BOOK III



SHEEP AND LAMBS

ALL in the April evening,
April airs were abroad ;
The sheep with their little lambs
Passed me by on the road.

The sheep with their little lambs
Passed me by on the road ;
All in the April evening
I thought on the Lamb of God.

The lambs were weary, and crying
With a weak, human cry.
I thought on the Lamb of God
Going meekly to die.

Up in the blue, blue mountains
Dewy pastures are sweet ;
Rest for the little bodies,
Rest for the little feet.

But for the Lamb of God
Up on the hilltop green
Only a cross of shame
Two stark crosses between.

All in the April evening,
April airs were abroad ;
I saw the sheep with their lambs,
And thought on the Lamb of God.

BETHLEHEM

WHERE man was all too marred with sin,
The ass, the ox were bidden in.

Where angels were unmeet to come
These humble entered Holydom.

Their innocent eyes and full of awe
Saw the fulfilment of the law.

There in the stable with the beast
The Christmas Child hath spread His feast.

These gave their bed and eke their board
To be a cradle for their Lord.

Their honey-breath, their tears all mild,
Warmed in the cold the new-born Child.

These His adorers were before
The Kings and Shepherds thronged the door.

And where no angels knelt there kneeled
The innocent creatures of the field.

O simple ones, much honoured ;
He who oppresses you indeed

Oppresses His kind hosts that lay
Once in the stable on the hay.

ST. FRANCIS TO THE BIRDS

LITTLE sisters, the birds :

We must praise God, you and I—
You, with songs that fill the sky,
I, with halting words.

All things tell His praise,
Woods and waters thereof sing,
Summer, Winter, Autumn, Spring,
And the nights and days.

Yea, and cold and heat,
And the sun and stars and moon,
Sea with her monotonous tune,
Rain and hail and sleet,

And the winds of heaven,
And the solemn hills of blue,
And the brown earth and the dew,
And the thunder even,

And the flowers' sweet breath,
All things make one glorious voice ;
Life with fleeting pains and joys,
And our sister, Death.

Little flowers of air,
With your feathers soft and sleek,
And your bright brown eyes and meek,
He hath made you fair.

He hath taught to you
Skill to weave in tree and thatch
Nests where happy mothers hatch
Speckled eggs of blue,

And hath children given.
When the soft heads overbrim
The brown nests, then thank ye Him
In the clouds of heaven.

Also in your lives
Live His laws Who loveth you.
Husbands, be ye kind and true ;
Be home-keeping, wives—

Love not gossiping ;
Stay at home and keep the nest ;
Fly not here and there in quest
Of the newest thing.

Live as brethren live :
Love be in each heart and mouth ;
Be not envious, be not wroth,
Be not slow to give.

When ye build the nest,
Quarrel not o'er straw or wool ;
He who hath be bountiful
To the neediest.

Be not puffed nor vain
Of your beauty or your worth,
Of your children or your birth,
Or the praise you gain.

Eat not greedily :

Sometimes for sweet mercy's sake,
Worm or insect spare to take ;
Let it crawl or fly.

See ye sing not near

To our church on holy day,
Lest the human-folk should stray
From their prayers to hear.

Now depart in peace :

In God's name I bless each one ;
May your days be long i' the sun
And your joys increase.

And remember me,

Your poor brother Francis, who
Loves you, and gives thanks to you
For this courtesy.

Sometimes when ye sing,

Name my name, that He may take
Pity for the dear song's sake
On my shortcoming.

THE MAKING OF BIRDS

God made Him birds in a pleasant humour ;

Tired of planets and suns was He.

He said : " I will add a glory to summer,

Gifts for my creatures banished from Me ! "

He had a thought and it set Him smiling
Of the shape of a bird and its glancing head,
Its dainty air and its grace beguiling :
“ I will make feathers,” the Lord God said.

He made the robin ; He made the swallow ;
His deft hands moulding the shape to His mood,
The thrush and lark and the finch to follow,
And laughed to see that His work was good.

He who has given men gift of laughter,
Made in His image ; He fashioned fit
The blink of the owl and the stork thereafter,
The little wren and the long-tailed tit.

He spent in the making His wit and fancies ;
The wing-feathers He fashioned them strong ;
Deft and dear as daisies and pansies,
He crowned His work with the gift of song.

“ Dearlings,” He said, “ make songs for My
praises ! ”

He tossed them loose to the sun and wind,
Airily sweet as pansies and daisies ;
He taught them to build a nest to their mind.

The dear Lord God of His glories weary—
Christ our Lord had the heart of a boy—
Made Him birds in a moment merry,
Bade them soar and sing for His joy.

THE ABBOT'S BEES

IN the warm garden to and fro
Goes Father Abbot, old and slow,
And reads his breviary, lifting oft
His mild eyes to the blue aloft.

He lays his finger in the page,
Sniffs at the sweets of thyme and sage,
Pauses beside the lavender,
Where bees hum in the scented air.

Close by in the midsummer day
His bearded monks are making hay,
Murmuring as they pass each other,
“Praise be to Jesu !” “Amen, brother !”

The bees hum o'er the mignonette
And the white clover, still dew-wet,
And in a velvet troop together
Fly off to rifle the sweet heather.

The air is full of sleepiness,
The drone of insects and the bees ;
The summer day nods unawares
As an old monk might at his prayers.

The windows of the novitiate
Are open ever early and late ;
And hear the voices like the hum
The bees make in the honey comb !

The tall lads, innocent and meek,
Gabble the Latin and the Greek.
“Now hear my bees in the clover-blooms !”
He saith to the old monk who comes.

“Do you not hear them, Brother Giles ?”
Listening with side-long head he smiles.
“Giles, do you hear the novices,
That are the Lord’s bees and my bees ?

“Giles, do you hear them making honey
All through the scented hours and sunny ?
They will make honey many a day
When you and I are lapped in clay.”

As though he heard the sweetest strain,
He smiles and listens, smiles again.
Monks in the meadow pass each other :
“Praise be to Jesu !” “Amen, brother !”

THE BIRDS’ BARGAIN

“O SPARE my cherries in the net,”
Brother Benignus prayed ; “and I
Summer and winter, shine and wet,
Will pile the blackbirds’ table high.”

“O spare my youngling peas,” he prayed,
“That for the Abbot’s table be ;
And every blackbird shall be fed.
Yea, they shall have their fill,” said he.

His prayer, his vow, the blackbirds heard,
And spared his shining garden-plot.
In abstinence went every bird,
All the old thieving ways forgot.

He kept his promise to his friends,
And daily set them finest fare
Of corn and meal, and manchet-ends,
With marrowy bones for winter bare.

Brother Benignus died in grace :
The brethren keep his trust, and feed
The blackbirds in this pleasant place,
Purged, as dear Heaven, from strife and greed.

The blackbirds sing the whole year long,
Here where they keep their promise given
And do the mellowing fruit no wrong.
Brother Benignus smiles in Heaven.

OF ST. FRANCIS AND THE ASS

OUR father, ere he went
Out with his brother, Death,
Smiling and well content
As a bridegroom goeth,
Sweetly forgiveness prayed
From man or beast whom he
Had ever injured
Or burdened needlessly.

“Verily,” then said he,
“I crave before I pass
Forgiveness full and free
Of my little brother, the ass.
Many a time and oft,
When winds and ways were hot,
He hath borne me cool and soft
And service grudged me not.

“And once did it betide
There was, unseen of me,
A gall upon his side
That suffered grievously.
And once his manger was
Empty and bare and brown.
(Praise God for sweet, dry grass
That Bethlehem folk shook down !)

“Consider, brethren,” said he,
“Our little brother ; how mild,
How patient, he will be,
Though men are fierce and wild.
His coat is grey and fine,
His eyes are kind with love ;
This little brother of mine
Is gentle as the dove.

“Consider how such an one
Beheld our Saviour born,
And carried Him, full-grown,
Through Eastern streets one morn.

For this the Cross is laid
Upon him for a sign.
Greatly is honoured
This little brother of mine.”

And even while he spake,
Down in the stable stall
His little ass ’gan shake
And turned its face to the wall.
Down fell the heavy tear ;
Its gaze so mournful was,
Fra Leo, standing near,
Pitied the little ass.

That night our father died,
All night the kine did low :
The ass went misty-eyed,
With patient tears and slow.
The very birds on wings
Made mournful cries in the air.
Amen ! All living things
Our father’s brethren were.

THE ASS SPEAKS

I AM the little ass of Christ.
I carried Him ere He was born,
And bore Him to His bitter Tryst
Unwilling, that Palm Sunday morn.

I was His Mother's servant, I,
I carried her from Nazareth
Up to the shining hill-country
To see the Lady Elizabeth.

The stones were many in my road,
By valleys steeper than a cup
'I, trembling for my heavenly load,
Went cat-foot, since I held It up.

To me the wonderful charge was given.
I, even the little ass, did go
Bearing the very weight of Heaven,
So I crept cat-foot, sure and slow.

Again that night that He was born
I carried my dear burdens twain,
And heard dull people's insolent scorn
Bidding them to the night and rain.

I knelt beside my brother ox
And saw the very Birth ! O Love,
And awe and wonder ! little folks
May see such sights nor die thereof.

The chilly Babe we breathed upon,
Warmed with our breath the frozen air ;
Kneeling beside Our Lady's gown
His only comfort saving Her.

I am beaten, weary-foot, ill-fed,
Men curse me : yet I bear withal
Christ's Cross betwixt my shoulders laid.
So I am honoured though I'm small.

I bore Christ Jesus and I bear
His Cross upon my rough, grey back.
Dear Christian people, pray you, spare
The whip, for Jesus Christ, His sake.

GOD'S BIRD

NAY, not Thine eagle, Lord ;
No golden eagle I,
That creep half-fainting on the sward
And have not wings to fly.

Nor yet Thy swallow dear,
That, faring home to Thee,
Looks on the storm and has no fear
And broods above the sea.

Nor yet Thy tender dove,
Meek as Thyself, Thou Lamb !
I would I were the dove, Thy love,
And not the thing I am !

But take me in Thy hand
To be Thy sparrow, then ;
Were two sparrows in Holy Land,
One farthing bought the twain.

Make me Thy sparrow, then,
That trembles in Thy hold ;
And who shall pluck me out again
And cast me in the cold ?

But if I fall at last,
 A thing of little price,
If Thou one thought on me hast cast,
 Lo, then my Paradise !

BOOK IV



THE GARDEN

OUR Lord, Christ Jesus, Son of God,
Loved gardens while on earth He abode.

There was a garden where He took
His pleasures oft, by Kedron's brook.
There in His uttermost agony
He found a pillow whereon to lie
And anguish while His disciples slept.
Be sure the little grass-blades kept
Vigil with Him, and the grey olives
Shivered and sighed like one that grieves :
And the flowers hid their eyes for fear !
His garden was His comforter.
There to the quiet heart He made
He came, and it upheld His head
Before the angel did. Therefore
Blessed be gardens evermore !

Christ Jesus in the sad world's dearth
Lay three days in the lap of earth :
And while He lay, stabbed through, one Wound,
The garden waited, tear-bedrowned,
Quiet from sunrise to sunrise.
The widowed flowers had veiled their eyes ;
No Canterbury bells did ring ;
Nor rose lift her burnt-offering ;
Nor primroses nor violets,
Nor sops-in-wine nor mignonettes,
But thought upon the thorns and spears
And on the blessed Mary's tears.

All in a Truce of God, a peace,
The garden rocked Him on her knees.

But O ! in the beautiful rose-red day
Who comes a-walking down this way ?
Why's Magdalen weeping ? Ah, sweet lady,
She knows not where is her Lord's Body !
Sweet Magdalen, see ! here is your Love !
Whom Solomon's-seal and the sweet clove
Brush with their lips as He goes by ;
And love-lies-bleeding and rosemary.
Now bid His disciples haste ! Bring hither
His Mother and St. John together !
But 'twas the Garden saw Him rise.
Wherefore she flaunts her peacock's eyes,
Wherefore her birds sing low and loud.
The heart that bore His sleep is proud.

Because the garden was His friend,
Blessed be gardens world without end !
Amen.

INTROIT

'TWERE bliss to see one lark
Soar to the azure dark
Singing upon his high celestial road.
I have seen many hundreds soar, thank God.

To see one spring begin
In her first heavenly green,
Were grace unmeet for any mortal clod.
I have seen many springs begin, thank God !

After the lark the swallow,
Blackbird in hill and hollow,
Thrushes and nightingales all roads I trod,
As though one bird were not enough, thank God !

Not one flower, but a rout
All exquisite, are out :
All white and golden every stretch of sod,
As though one flower were not enough, thank God !

PLANTING BULBS

SETTING my bulbs a-row
In cold earth under the grasses,
Till the frost and the snow
Are gone and the Winter passes—

Sudden a footfall light,
Sudden a bird-call ringing ;
And these in gold and in white
Shall rise with a sound of winging.

Airy and delicate all,
All go trooping and dancing
At Spring's call and footfall,
Airily dancing, advancing.

In the dark of the year,
Turning the earth so chilly,
I look to the day of cheer,
Primrose and daffodilly.

Turning the sods and the clay
I think on the poor sad people
Hiding their dead away
In the churchyard, under the steeple.

All poor women and men,
Broken-hearted and weeping,
Their dead they call on in vain,
Quietly smiling and sleeping.

Friends, now listen and hear,
Give over crying and grieving,
There shall come a day and a year
When the dead shall be as the living.

There shall come a call, a footfall,
And the golden trumpeters blowing
Shall stir the dead with their call,
Bid them be rising and going.

Then in the daffodil weather
Lover shall run to lover ;
Friends all trooping together ;
Death and Winter be over.

Laying my bulbs in the dark,
Visions have I of hereafter.
Lip to lip, breast to breast, hark !
No more weeping, but laughter !

THE TREE

WHEN that man was cast away
Out of Eden for his sin,
God put by His wrath to say :
“Now his sad time shall begin ;

“My poor creature, made to walk
By Me under forest trees,
Made to walk with Me and talk
When the evening brings much ease :

“Since a tree hath him undone,
My poor creature that I planned,
By a Tree he shall be won,
Given again into My Hand.”

God took up a seed of life,
Planted it in tear-wet earth :
“My poor Adam and his wife
Shall have shade and quiet mirth.

“This, My tree, shall grow and grow
Till its branches fill the air ;
Not My groves of Heaven may show
Princely fruit as this shall bear.

“Hanging head and knees, alack,
This shall bear a noble Flower,
And My Tree will give Me back
What I lost by Eden bower.”

LEAVES

MYRIADS and myriads plumed their glistening wings,
As fine as any bird that soars and sings,
As bright as fireflies or the dragon-flies,
Or birds of paradise.

Myriads and myriads waved their sheeny fans,
Soft as the dove's breast, or the pelican's ;
And some were gold, and some were green, and some
Pink-lipped, like apple-bloom.

A low wind tossed the plumage all one way,
Rippled the gold feathers, and green and gray,—
A low wind that in moving sang one song
All day and all night long.

Sweet honey in the leafage, and cool dew,
A roof of stars, a tent of gold and blue ;
Silence and sound at once, and dim green light,
To turn the gold day night.

Some trees hung lanterns out, and some had stars
Silver as Hesper and rose-red as Mars ;
A low wind flung the lanterns low and high,—
A low wind like a sigh.

Myriads and myriads, more in number than
The sea's sands, or its drops of water wan,
Sang one Name in the rapture that is May,
With faces turned one way.

ROSA MYSTICA

THIS rose so exquisite,
So perfect, so complete,
Beauty beyond all price,—
With the hour it dies.

God makes Him roses fast,
With such magnificent haste,
Multitudes, multitudes,
In gardens, fields, and woods.

The roses tell His praise
Their little length of days ;
Testify to His name
Gold on gold, flame on flame.

They are scarce here, scarce blown,
But they are gone, are flown ;
The gardener's broom must sweep them
And in the darkness heap them.

Drift of rose-leaves upon
The garden-bed, the lawn :
The exquisite thought of God
Is scattered, wasted abroad.

What of the soul of the rose ?
It shall not die with those ;
It shall wake, shall live again
In God's rose-garden.

It shall climb rose-trellises
Before God's palaces ;
The Eternal Rose shall cover
The House of God all over.

She shall breathe out her soul
And yet living, made whole,
Shall offer her oblation
Out of her purest passion.

She shall know all bliss
Where God's garden is :
The rose drinking her fill is
Of joy with her sister lilies.

Where the Water of Life sweet
Bathes her from head to feet,
The River of Life flows—
There is the Rose.

BOOK V



THE CHRISTENING

O CALL the child from some kind saint
So quick to run and save,
Not Deirdre with the griefs acquaint,
Not Grania nor Maeve.

Not Daphne, Phœbe, Phyllis, Prue,
Nor any country Grace,
Lest that your gossips prove untrue,
In some most bitter case.

In Heaven there stand carnations fair
Beside our dear Lord's knee—
Margaret, Catherine, Magdalen, Clare,
Dorothy, Cecily.

And all day long in the still place
Their haloes fall and rise,
Their faces turned to the one Face,
The glory on their eyes.

Or give the chrisomed child to keep
To Mary of the Swords :
The heart that held God's Son asleep
Is soft to babes and birds.

The world is set with many a snare
Where evil things affright ;
Give her a name that she may wear
Like armour in God's sight.

Give to her little stumbling feet
A help most sure and kind,
That, when she cries, a foot so fleet
Run to her like the wind.

Give her a name that frights God's foes,
The name one bears who is
In God's rose-garden a tall rose
Among the white lilies.

Give her a friend who will not fail,
Who walks in white so brave ;
Not Deirdre of the sorrows pale,
Nor Grania, nor Maeve.

THE ONLY CHILD

LEST he miss other children, lo !
His angel is his playfellow ;
A riotous angel two years old,
With wings of rose and curls of gold.

There on the nursery floor together
They play when it is rainy weather,
Building brick castles with much pain,
Only to knock them down again.

Two golden heads together look
An hour long o'er a picture-book,
Or, tired of being good and still,
They play at horses with good-will.

And when the boy laughs you shall hear
Another laughter silver-clear,
Sweeter than music of the skies,
Or harps, or birds of Paradise.

Two golden heads one pillow press,
Two rosebuds shut for heaviness ;
The wings of one are round the other,
Lest chill befall his tender brother.

All day, with forethought mild and grave,
The little angel's quick to save,
And still outruns with tender haste
The adventurous feet that go too fast ;

From draughts, from fire, from cold and stings,
Wraps him within his gauzy wings ;
And knows his father's pride, and shares
His happy mother's tears and prayers.

LOVE COMFORTLESS

THE child is in the night and rain
On whom no tenderest wind might blow,
And out alone in a hurricane.

Ah, no,

The child is safe in Paradise !

The snow is on his gentle head,
His little feet are in the snow.
O, very cold is his small bed !

Ah, no,

Lift up your heart, lift up your eyes !

Over the fields and out of sight,
Beside the lonely river's flow,
Lieth the child this bitter night.

*Ah, no,
The child sleeps under Mary's eyes !*

What wandering lamb cries sore distressed,
Whilst I with fire and comfort go ?
O, let me warm him in my breast !

*Ah, no,
'Tis warm in God's lit nurseries !*

LAMBS

He sleeps as a lamb sleeps,
Beside his mother.
Somewhere in yon blue deeps
His tender brother
Sleeps like a lamb and leaps.

He feeds as a lamb might,
Beside his mother.
Somewhere in fields of light
A lamb, his brother,
Feeds, and is clothed in white.

THE SHEEPFOLD

THE Shepherd of the sheepfold leant
Upon his crook, and saw within
The fold his milky ewes content,
His white lambs innocent of sin.

The milky mothers giving suck
He saw, and merry lambs at play ;
Yet, leaning on his shepherd's crook,
His eyes, his heart, were turned away.

His tender thoughts were turned apart
To where his orphaned lambs cried on ;
Their cries lay heavy on his heart—
Poor milkless lambkins and undone.

With tears he saw the milky dams
Go dropping milk upon the grass ;
These were the mothers of dead lambs,
The mothers of dead lambs, alas !

O little lambs that would not live,
Your milk runs all to bitter waste,
Your milk that makes the Shepherd grieve
Runs out like tears so hot and fast.

O comfort, comfort then those sheep,
Whose little lovely lambs are dead.
The milk that makes the Shepherd weep
Runs out like tears, and none is fed.

THE NEW MOON AT CHRISTMAS

THE new moon at Christmas
Is like a little boat
That the winds out of Paradise
Set sweetly afloat.

With the Star at its mast-head,
Its sails of silver bright,
The new moon at Christmas
Brings home the world's Delight.

The new moon at Christmas
It brings in its wake
Oh many a small boat sailing
Upon the night's blue lake.
The children who left us
And never looked behind
Come sailing swiftly homeward
With a favouring wind.

They sit down so sweetly
By the hearth-fire warm,
Like doves they come flocking
From the Winter's storm.
The mother's arms are round them,
Soft cheek and shining curl ;
Oh, many a mother's darling,
Many a boy and girl.

The new moon at Christmas
Is a cradle small
Where Mary sits rocking
The King of children all.
She croons Him a lullaby,
Oh very sweet she sings,
Shaking the snow-flake feathers
For the King of Kings.

The cradle hangs sweetly
In the starshine cold,
And many an empty cradle
Hath a babe again to hold.
About the rosy hearth-fire
Where two sit alone
There come smiling so faintly
The children long flown.

The new moon at Christmas
That shone when Christ was born
Brings home the lost children
To the hearts forlorn.
They sit down by the hearth-fire
Light as the falling snow—
Lighter than snow their kisses—
Till it is time to go.

THE CHILD

I AM Thy child, foolish and small,
Content with things my fancy weaves ;
Somewhere, behind the outer wall,
The soul judicious sits and grieves.

I grasp at toys and painted things,
The rainbow bubble takes my eyes,
I am fain of the butterfly's bright wings
And every radiant thing that flies.

I am not wise : I grasp at toys,
 Poor passing things that break in air ;
I am foolish with small girls and boys,
 Playing as a child plays even at prayer.

Still when Thou comest I am fain
 To look away from Thee and run
Back to my hoop and ball again,
 My pleasant playing in the sun.

When wilt Thou say : It is enough !
 Thou art grown : thou growest old : be wise !
Yet it was children Thou didst love
 When Thou didst come in mortal guise.

What if my folly found Thee kind
 As Thou wast to the children then ?
What if Thy kindness had no mind
 To break my foolish toys in twain ?

What if Thou, knowing me vain and light,
 Should'st smile and say : So children be.
Oh, if I might go clad in white,
 Carrying a young child's heart to Thee—

Oh if my folly kept me small,
 Like lambs and children undefiled,
I would not grow a man and tall,
 But be Thy child, Thy foolish child.

B O O K V I



CHRISTMAS COMMUNION

My heart a stable bare and hard,
Not sweet with balm and spikenard,
Was all I had to give Him when
His love bade Him be born again.
And yet His choice the stable is
Before the splendid palaces.

Beside the bed of starveling grass
Whereon He would be born, alas !
Are two great beasts that hang the head :
Ox of my appetite, my greed,
Ass of my folly, gross and dull :
Are these Thy courtiers, Beautiful ?

Without, the Heaven a glory shows,
Angels on Angels, rows on rows ;
And stars on stars, all shine on shine ;
And Kings fain to be serfs of Thine.
Thou hast such adoration. Nay,
Here wilt Thou come ? Here wilt Thou stay ?

Bid me with ox and ass to lie
Face downward in humility,
And in a little truce of Heaven
Know we are ransomed and forgiven.
Bid us to weep, bid us to burn,
From sin and ignorance to turn.

AFTER COMMUNION

I

I CARRY now within my breast
The Son of God ; His rest, His nest :
As Mary's arms once cradled close
Her Rose of Heaven, her golden Rose.

I am the stable and the bed,
The holy hay where He was laid.
The angels stand at gaze to see
What wonder hath been wrought on me.

I am the House of Nazareth,
Where Jesus drew His quiet breath,
When He was little and a boy,
His father's light, His mother's joy.

I am the ass went carrying,
Ere he was born, the Precious Thing ;
The ass, whereof God's guard did keep
The four little feet lest they should slip.

I am the room wherein was set
The Last Supper's most heavenly meat ;
And I the platter and the cup
He gave to them when He did sup.

I am the Cross, whereon He lay,
The rock-hewn grave cold as the clay ;
But not the garden green wherein
He talked with Mary Magdalen.

I shine beyond the fairest star,
More than the constellations are,
A little while : till He is gone,
And all my lights die, one by one.

I am naught but common clay, so hard.
I bring nor balm nor spikenard ;
Nor fling Him Magdalen's beauteous fleece,
Nor shed her tears that win heart's ease.

Yet am His Cup : no porcelain fine,
Nor wrought silver, nor gold ashine :
His choice : and shining by that bliss
Beyond the heavenly chalices.

II

My soul, that's house-mate with my body,
And finds the tenement too small,
Frets at her vesture, white and ruddy,
Would break the windows, scale the wall ;

Would spread her useless wings, and flying
Leave all her dull estate behind.
To-day, with angels touching, vieing,
She finds her prison to her mind.

See now the prisoner's manumission !
And yet she hugs her prison still,
Where shining heads and wings elysian
Are crowding by her window-sill.

She sweeps her room and makes it festal,
Flings a white cloth upon the board,
And with a bridal heart and vestal
Awaits the coming of her Lord.

This is her hour. Enrapt, with Mary,
She breaks her box of ointment rare,
Kneels in her heaven, Love's sanctuary,
And feels His touch upon her hair.

Meanwhile her house-mate who shall perish
One hour is glorified likewise ;
Envied of angels, she doth cherish
The Darling of the earth and skies.

One hour, poor wench, her honour's over ;
She, destined only for the earth,
Fashioned for no immortal lover,
Gives praise for crowns beyond her worth.

No longer now the soul's in prison,
Nor tethered by her useless wings ;
Slips bonds ; follows her Lord arisen,
And ere she falls by heaven's gate sings.

THE PROUD LADY

MYSELF will ne'er myself decry
Nor count myself all base,
Since that a noble Love have I
Who stoops to my disgrace.

Though I be poor and small and mean,
What matter so I be ?
Still I am prouder than a Queen
That He has chosen me.

My heart is but a barren spot
Cold as a stone, as hard ;
The angels bring my arid plot
Heaven's balm and spikenard.

As He goes in and He goes out
They envy still my bliss,
Shaking the stars of Heaven about
The nard and ambergris.

As once upon the garden ground
He rested His spent head,
I set within my narrow bound
Grey stones to be His bed.

As once He lay within the tomb
Stark in His three days' rest,
A bitter, an unlovely room
I make Him in my breast.

And yet myself I will not scorn,
And why indeed should I ?
Seeing for me my Prince doth spurn
The splendours of His sky.

LVX IN TENEBRIS

AT night what things will stalk abroad,
What veiled shapes, and eyes of dread !
With phantoms in a lonely road
And visions of the dead.

The kindly room when day is here,
At night takes ghostly terrors on ;
And every shadow hath its fear,
And every wind its moan.

Lord Jesus, Day-star of the world,
Rise Thou, and bid this dark depart,
And all the east, a rose uncurled,
Grow golden at the heart !

Lord, in the watches of the night,
Keep Thou my soul ! a trembling thing
As any moth that in daylight
Will spread a rainbow wing.

THE NIGHT COMETH

DEEPER and deeper grows the shade,
It will be dark ere evening come.
Yet shall my heart be not dismayed
If Thou art with me in the gloom.

What though the faces grow more dim,
The kind and friendly faces all,
If Thou, girt by the Cherubim,
Should'st walk with me at evenfall ?

What though Thy hills die off in mist,
Thy sky, Thy stars, Thy night, Thy morn—
Though grey be rose and amethyst,
And of earth's glory I am shorn?

What if Thy face should rise upon
My starless night and I should see
Its beauty more than moon and sun
Lighting my darkness wonderfully?

What if this beauteous world Thou'st wrought
Were but a maze where I should stray
And lose Thee,—losing Thee have naught?
Let night fall on my world and day!

Oh, if in clouds of blackest night
Groping I find Thy fingers kind,
Thine eyes turn all my darkness light:
Star of my blindness, be I blind!

THE COLLOQUY

“IN the crevice of the rock,
Oh my sister, my dove,
Show me thy face.”

“I the soiled of the flock!
Though I yearn, Thou wouldst turn
From my disgrace.”

“But know you not (He said)
When I died from My side
Poured blood and water,

Water clear and blood red
To wash white in death's despite
Thy sins, daughter ? ”

“ See my heart, shrivelled small,
Cold as stone, cold and lone,
Sad its story !
Why dost Thou come at all ?
Here's no place for Thy grace,
King of Glory.”

“ It is hard, yet not so hard
As the bed where I was laid
For thy dear sake,
In the balm and spikenard,
In death's swound, all one wound
Till third day-break.”

“ My arms for Thy head
And my breast for Thy rest,
I, the unkind one !
Go higher ; in my stead
Seek one white, ardent, bright
Seek Thou and find one.”

He said : “ Upon the Tree
With content was I spent,
I, the Lover !
I, who have chosen thee
Warm thee through, make anew
Over and over.”

“In the crevice of the rock
Then break me, re-make me
After Thy fashion.
I, the impure of the flock,
Hold me, enfold me
In the sea of Thy Passion.”

VOTIVE OFFERING

HEARTS of silver and of gold
Men had brought in days of old
To Thy shrine for offering,
Symbols of a holier thing.

Lord, Lord, dear, adored !
Take my little candle, Lord ;
Through the lights in Paradise
Let my candle please Thine eyes.

Hearts that ache and hearts that break,
Hearts to shatter and remake,
Here before Thy feet are laid,
Where June's roses burn and fade.

Lord, Lord, life is light,
Flame a heart that burns to white ;
As this flame mounts steadily
Draw a heart that turns from Thee.

For a cold heart all its days,
Let my candle tell Thy praise ;
For a heart that's ignorant,
Let my candle one hour chant.

Poor my candle is and small ;
Yet Thou know'st the thoughts of all ;
How my candle saith my prayer
When my feet go elsewhere.

How one thought I leave behind,
Though my thoughts are hard to bind ;
Though I go away, forget,
Thou one hour o'erlookest it.

BOOK VII



MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

NOT woman-faced and sweet, as look
The angels in the picture-book ;
But terrible in majesty,
More than an army passing by.

His hair floats not upon the wind
Like theirs, but curled and closely twined ;
Wrought with his aureole, so that none
Shall know the gold curls from the crown.

His wings he hath put away in steel,
He goes mail-clad from head to heel ;
Never moon-silver hath outshone
His breast-plate and his morion.

His brows are like a battlement,
Beautiful, brave and innocent ;
His eyes with fires of battle burn—
On his strong mouth the smile is stern.

His horse, the horse of Heaven, goes forth,
Bearing him to the South and North,
Neighing far off, as one that sees
The battle over distances.

His fiery sword is never at rest,
His foot is in the stirrup prest ;
Through all the world where wrong is done
Michael the Soldier rideth on.

Michael, Commander ! Angels are
That sound the trumpet, and that bear
The banners by the Throne, where is
The King one nameth on one's knees.

Angels there are of peace and prayers,
And they that go with wayfarers,
And they that watch the house of birth,
And they that bring the dead from earth.

And mine own Angel. Yet I see,
Heading God's army gloriously,
Michael Archangel, like a sun,
Splendid beyond comparison !

THE DREAM OF MARY

"MARY, Mother, art thou asleep?"

"Nay, dear Son, but waking and dreaming."

"Mary, Mother, why dost thou weep?"

"I saw Thy dear Blood flowing and streaming."

"Mary, Mother, tell me thy dream."

"Blessed Son, Thou wert trapped and taken,
Scourged with stripes in a hall didst seem,
Mocked with laughter, despised, forsaken."

"Blessed Mother, thy dream tell all."

"Blessed Son, on a Cross wert lying,
While a black, blind knave from the hall
Pierced Thy heart still warm from dying."

“Mary, Mother, thy dream is true ;
True thy dreaming, sad Mother Mary.
Whether the years be many or few,
Still the hunters gain on the quarry.”

Over the hill, and a cold, cold hill,
I saw Mary dreaming and weeping,
Making a space betwixt souls and ill,
Snatching men from hell and its keeping.

OF AN ANGEL

NEVER alone upon my way :
Mine Angel's with me every day ;
And all night long he sits and sings,
Shaking the darkness off his wings.

The wavering moonlight steals and slips
From amber head to pinion tips,
Bathing him in a silver sea
That makes his eyes a mystery.

When I am bruised and sad and sore,
Have I not felt him leaning o'er,
Kissing the heavy lids to sleep ?
Yea, I have heard him weep and weep.

In the noon-sun I see him stand,
Rosy azaleas in his hand,
His sapphire gown, his aureoled curl,
His opal wings and mother-o'pearl.

And while this Angel walks with me
I fear not all the ill I see,
Though in the fruit a canker grows,
And serpents harbour 'neath the rose.

In noon-day gold, in moonlight snow,
I know the precious things I know,
Hidden not from my love-keen sight
By dazzle of day and mirk of night.

Mine Angel's praying hands and meek,
The pure young outline of his cheek,
His grave young mouth, his brow like snow,
His everlasting eyes I know.

Love lights his taper at those eyes,
O stainless Bird of Paradise !
Love in your heart to Love divine
Has built a temple and a shrine.

O lips that bless, and eyes that yearn,
And sometimes sad, but never stern,
Dearest, my friend, my gift of God,
Companion on my dangerous road.

Stay with me, though the day be long,
And Heaven is lonelier for your song ;
Though I be sad, and all my plea
Is only my sad poverty.

FOUR ANGELS

FOUR great angels of the host
Keep a world that else were lost,
Sun, Wind, Rain, Frost,
Breathings of the Holy Ghost.

Sun the most glorious one,
Power, Prince, Dominion,
Whose full gaze all eyes must shun,
Kindles life, gives fire to the stars.

Wind that no mortal sees
Walks the waters, the high trees,
His cloak flies in the wild countries,
An evil shape before him flees.

Rain walks with silver feet
Through a dry world dead of heat,
Gives the field its rivulet,
The sound of waters, many and sweet.

Frost winged in gems and white
Breathes on a starry night,
Bids : Heart, sleep in life's despite,
Grow strong, sleep, till day's in sight.

Four great angels keep the earth
Which to God is something worth ;
One, with a most quiet mirth,
Dreams now and laughs beside my hearth.

THE LEPER

Not white and shining like an ardent flame,
Not like Thy Mother and the Saints in bliss,
But white from head to foot I bear my blame,
White as the leper is.

Unclean ! unclean ! But Thou canst make me
clean :

Yet if Thou clean'st me, Lord, see that I be
Like that one grateful leper of the ten
Who ran back praising Thee.

But if I must forget, take back Thy word ;
Be I unclean again but not ingrate.
Before I shall forget Thee, keep me, Lord,
A sick man at Thy gate.

GOOD FRIDAY

Good Friday is a heavenly day,
So bright, so fair, so still ;
They slay the King of all the world
On a high hill.

The birds sing sweet and low,
With a most quiet mirth ;
They scoop a hollow grave for Him,
The holiest head on earth.

Good Friday is a heavenly day,
New lights on earth and sky :
The day the Saviour of us all
Went forth to die.

Sweetly it rose and fell,
So calm, so light, so grave.
Christ Jesus, sacrificed for men,
Died—and forgave.

THE WOUNDS

God's son had Wounds five
To save men's souls alive.

Five Wounds, five Joys, Heartsease,
That spring for man's release.

The First Wound it pierced and struck
The hand that blessed and broke.

The Second stabbed with cruel smart
The hand was next His heart.

Of the Third Wound what shall be said
Wherewith His side was red ?

An Heavenly House, a Rosy Ark
To house men from the dark.

The Fourth and Fifth His feet did keep
That followed after His sheep

Nailed to the Cross lest they should press
On their high business.

The Wounds of Love they throbbed and bled ;
In Heaven they are not stayed.

In Heaven they are red roses five
That save men's souls alive.

Five roses on a heavenly tree
And Christ's men shall go free.

Five roses, crimson-dyed
In His hands, in His feet, in His side.

Five roses set between
God's anger and man's sin.

EASTER

BRING flowers to strew His way,
Yea, sing, make holiday ;
Bid young lambs leap,
And earth laugh after sleep.

For now He cometh forth
Winter flies to the north,
Folds wings and cries
Amid the bergs and ice.

Bring no sad palms like those
That led Him to His foes,
Bring wind-flower, daffodil,
From many a vernal hill.

Let there be naught but bloom
To light Him from the tomb
Who late hath slain
Death, and his glory ta'en.

Yea, Death, great Death is dead,
And Life reigns in his stead ;
Cometh the Athlete
New from dead Death's defeat.

Cometh the Wrestler,
But Death he makes no stir,
Utterly spent and done
And all his kingdom gone.

Bring flowers, make holiday
In His triumphal way ;
Salve ye with kisses
His hurts that make your blisses.

Bring flowers, make holiday
For His triumphal way ;
Yea, fling before Him
Hearts of men that adore Him.

APRIL IN IRELAND

UPON the highest peak and dim
Three Crosses idly stand ;
They have taken my Lord and hidden Him—
Ah, no, the Lord's at hand !

Here in this country soft and green
Not here was He betrayed,
Hung on a Cross, the thieves between,
The while His grave was made.

He is come forth from the grave's gloom,
And o'er this shining plain,
Until Ascension Day be come
He walks and talks with men.

Yet the three Crosses, cold and grey,
Seem still the watch to keep
Over the children at their play,
The white lambs and the sheep.

Oh, little happy vale and dear,
Oh, mountains grey and dim,
Here shall His little flock not fear,
Yea, they shall run with Him.

The innocent lilies, white and gold,
The daisied pastures bright,
Here He hath wattled in His fold
All pleasant in His sight.

The little river singing goes
And spreads a shining pool,
This April's sweeter than a rose,
New washed and wonderful.

Above the vale, on the highest hill,
Three Crosses keeping guard ;
With the windflower and the daffodil
And the smell of spikenard.

RESURRECTION

AFTER three days were over
The Lord new-risen was.
O Thou, of men the lover,
Bring all men to this pass !

Thou who wast dead yet risen,
Remember these and those :
Bring all men out of prison
Who died with Thee, nor rose.

Because that Thou, Lord Jesus,
Rose splendid after death,
Oh, pity us and ease us,
Who die with every breath !

Because for all our yearning
These come not to our cry :
Since there is no returning
And since that we must die.

Lord Jesus, who hast won us,
Pity Thy helpless folk ;
Yea, lay Thy staff upon us,
Thy mercy as a cloak.

Thou who didst die before us,
Thy three days quickly sped,
Dear Lord, be sorry for us
Who rise not from the dead.

SECOND SIGHT

“SISTER,” said blind Dara,
“What do you behold ? ”
Round her and St. Brigid
Flowed the dawn’s gold.
“Sister,” said blind Dara,
“Would that I might see
Veils of gold and silver
Drawn on hill and lea ! ”

Over her and Brigid
Carolled the lark,
Hills were heights of Heaven,
Though their feet were dark.
Dew in the shadow
Pearled the gossamer ;
Kine in the meadow
’Gan to low and stir.

Mists from the bogland
Curled like silver smoke ;
Young birds were singing
In the spreading oak.
To the east and southward
Scarlet grew the world,
And the sun leapt upward
As a ball is hurled.

Brigid, lost in praying,
Touched her sister's eyes ;
" O," she said, " my sister,
Dove of God, arise !
Eyes no longer sightless,
See His glory spread !"
Dara, with a loud cry,
Lifted up her head.

Saw the little rivers
Glide through bogland brown,
Where the yellow iris
Flaunted her gold gown.
Saw the sea of scarlet
Flush on hill and wood ;
Praised God's name, rejoicing
That His works were good.

" Yet," she said, " my sister,
Blind me once again,
Lest His Presence in me
Groweth less plain.

Stars and dawn and sunset
Keep till Paradise,
Here His face sufficeth
For my sightless eyes.

“O !” she said, “my sister,
Night is beautiful
Where His face is shining
Who was mocked as fool.
More than star and meteor,
More than moon or sun,
Is the thorn-crowned forehead
Of the Holy One.

“Haste,” she said, “and plunge me
Once again in night,
Lest perchance I lose Him,
Gaining my sight.”
Brigid, lost in praying,
Touched her eyes once more,
And the light went fading
Off sea and shore.

All His creatures praise Him,
From daylight to dun,
Stars and moon and cloudland,
And Messer the Sun ;
Seas and hills and forests,
And the frozen waste :
Dara in her blindness
Praiseth Him best.

BOOK VIII



THE LITTLE PRAISES

LET others praise Thee in the height,
With Holy, Holy, Holy !
I praise Thee as the cricket might,
A chirping voice and lowly.

Thou for Thy saints hast wrought great things,
The angels chant Thy praises ;
But I, as the grasshopper sings,
Low down among the daisies.

A cricket at the meadow's edge
That chirps and is not quiet.
Thou hast given me a field, a hedge,
And dew and daisies by it.

Some praise Thee for Thy heaven revealed :
Thy glory's far above me ;
My heaven is in a green grass field,
A child, a man to love me.

Oh, not one day of all my days
Without Thy gift went over.
My heaven is in the orchard ways,
The meadow grass and clover.

If a day brought me care and sighs,
What comfort followed after !
O, still my tears rise for Thine eyes
And for Thine ears my laughter.

Still was my shade dappled with sun
And still my sun had shadow,
And with glad eyes I gazed upon
The hill, the grass, the meadow.

Oh, not Thine angel, not Thy bird
Singing Thy praises clearly,
But a little voice on the green grass-sward
That thanks Thee late and early.

AN ECHO

I LOOK and see the world is fair,
And marvel much at what can move
The Lord of Earth, the Lord of Air,
To such extremity of love.

Seeing we have so short a space
To abide on this side of the tomb,
We could have borne a barer place,
An unadorned, but cleanly, room.

Pilgrim am I and wayfarer,
Sojourner one night at an inn ;
What matter if the room is bare,
So that the bed and sheets be clean ?

But ah, dear Lord, this would not suit
Thy love for me, impure, unkind ;
Thou settest the daisies at my feet,
Mak'st me the sky, mak'st me the wind.

Me doth ingenious love devise
The mountains and the lakes and sea,
All roses and the peacocks' eyes ;
The sun runs round his course for me.

For me the children and the lambs,
For me the nightingale and lark,
All fields and meadows and tall palms
And the starred curtain of the dark.

Yea, in Thine Image, I am given
The eyes to look beyond our night,
The love which makes of earth a heaven ;
Yea, am I loved in my despite.

Why should I try to tell them o'er,
Thy mercies that will not be said,
More than the sands on the sea-shore,
More than the hairs upon my head ?

Thou, Artizan and Architect,
And Master-Lover, Master-Mind,
With wondrous cunning Thou hast decked
These walls for common eyes and blind.

Since Thou dost such delights provide
For passing earth and sinful men,
What can it be Thou settest aside
For man when he is born again ?

What is it that Thou hast reserved ?
What glories on his sight will break,
When he sits down by angels served
And at Thy board his thirst will slake ?

Alas, my Lord, why wouldst Thou strive
To make so fair a house of call,
That there are some who here will live
As though Thy lovely earth were all ?

Yea, though we turn Thy gifts to ill,
Make of Thy benefits our bane,
Thy love, Thy love, transcending still
Seeks us again, finds us again.

AN ANTHEM IN HEAT

Now praise the Lord, both moon and sun,
And praise Him all ye nights and days,
And golden harvests every one,
And all ye hidden waterways,
With cattle standing to the knees
Safe from the bitter gadfly's sting ;
But praise Him most, O little breeze
That walk'st abroad at evening.

O praise Him, all ye orchards now,
And all ye gardens deep in green,
Ripe apples on the yellowing bough,
And golden plum and nectarine,
And peaches ruddier than the rose,
And pears against the southern wall :
But most the little wind that blows,
The blessed wind at evenfall.

O praise Him, hoary dews again,
Drenching the meadows 'neath the moon,
And praise Him, hidden founts of rain,
And amber brooks singing a tune,
And icy deeps of well-water,
And each pellucid stream and spring ;
But praise Him most, O wind astir,
O blessed wind at evening.

O praise Him now, ye burning days
Of golden summer, hot and spent ;
Planets and stars, see that His praise
Be blown about the firmament.
Yet praise Him best, O little wind
That out of heaven wilt blow and call,
Because, because our God is kind
And bids us live at evenfall.

THANKSGIVING

O how good God is that He sends
Stores of unfailing love to me,
And work and prayer and praise of friends,
Blackbirds and thrushes in the tree,
And sheep-bells in the fields, and roses,
And all the sweets of May and June,
And lavender and dew and posies,
And sun and moon.

O how good God is that He sends
Bean-rows in blossom, bees i' the hive,
Grey dawns and golden evening-ends,
And a glad heart to be alive ;

A grateful mind and quiet fancies,
Shade from the sun and sleep at night,
And clumps of brown and golden pansies,
And lilies white.

O how good God is that He sends
A little child to be all ours,
Mine and my dearest Love's, and tends
Our blossom in the sun and showers,
And bids His angels still keep near him
Lest that the little feet should miss,
And wings of angels still to bear him
Ever in bliss.

O how good God is that He keeps
The child for ever and ever well,
Above the tempests and the deeps,
In joy no tongue can tell.
Our little lamb of God goes straying,
By daisied meadows, 'neath dappled skies ;
Our little lamb of God goes playing
Under God's eyes.

THE QUIET NIGHTS

UNMINDFUL of my low desert
Who turn e'en blessings to my hurt,
God sends me graces o'er and o'er,
More than the sands on the seashore.

Among the blessings He doth give
My starveling soul that she may live,
I praise Him for my nights He kept
And all the quiet sleep I slept

Since I was young, who now grow old.
For all those nights of heat, of cold,
I slept the sweet hours through, nor heard
Even the call of the first bird.

Nights when the darkness covered me
In a great peace like a great sea
With waves of sweetness, who should lie
Wakeful for mine iniquity.

Cool nights of fragrance, dripping sweet,
After the sultriness of heat,
Amid grey meadows drenched with dew ;
Sweet was the sleep my eyelids knew.

Surely some angel kept my bed
After I had knelt down and prayed.
Like a young child I slept, until
The day stood at the window-sill.

I thank Him for the nights of stars,
Bright Saturn with his rings, and Mars,
And overhead the Milky Way ;
Nights when the summer lightnings play.

How many a Milky Way I trod,
And through the mercy of my God
Drank milk and honey, wrapped in ease
Of darkness and sweet heaviness !

I thank Him for the wakening bird,
And the struck hours I have not heard,
And for the morns so cool, so kind,
That found me fresh in heart and mind.

Among the gifts of His mercy,
More than the leaves upon the tree,
The sands upon the shore, I keep
And name my lovely nights of sleep.

THE SERVANTS

I HAVE six servants for my use,
Two bear me wheresoe'er I choose ;
Carry me through the world where'er
I choose to be a traveller.

Two, feat and nimble, do my will,
Write, play, sew, toilers tireless still,
Serve me with joy, serve me with love,
And never cry, "It is enough."

Two yet remaining ope for me
The world of Art and Poetry,
The dear delights of Nature spread
That feast my soul like daily bread.

The feet that bear me long and well,
Wonderfully wrought, a miracle :
I praise God as I walk abroad
For these strong, delicate works of God.

Likewise my hands that toil and moil,
Nor in my service fear a soil,
Wonderful hands that still achieve
So much between the morn and eve.

Yet of my eyes what shall I say,
That without any holiday,
Year after year *sans* ease and rest,
Work for me like the patient beast ?

The eyes I have not thought to spare,
Being a merciless task-master,
Not careful of their strength nor wise,—
I crave forgiveness of my eyes.

When on one day account I shall
Unto the Over-Lord of all
For these my servants, I shall say,
“Well did they serve me in my day.”

And on that day of the Great Assize
I pray my hands, my feet, my eyes
Accuse me not. Ah, why should I fear
These fellow-travellers, kind and dear ?

These comrades on the heavenward road,
Those cunning, wonderful works of God.
Not servants ! Nay, but each a friend,
For whom I praise God, world without end.

ALL IN ALL

THOU knowest, though still I fail and fall,
Thy love is yet mine all in all—
My health, my wealth, my joy, my law,
Yea and the very breath I draw.

As Peter said, I say the word :
“Thou knowest that I love Thee, Lord !”—
I, stained with more than his disgrace,
And yet so bold before Thy face !

The hills, the vales, my words repeat—
The solid earth beneath my feet,
The sun, the moon, the stars at even,
Yea and the listening saints in heaven.

Bear witness now, ye leaping seas,
And all ye woodland palaces,
And Orient lands of spice and scents,
And Northern ice-bound continents :

In this hard heart, so cold and small,
My Lord is still mine all in all ;
And if He turn His face away,
A cloud is on the face of day ;

And whitest day is blackest night
If I am banished from His sight ;
And if afar He lingereth,
My life is living death in death.

A heart so hard, so cold, so small,
What wouldst Thou with this heart at all ?
So weak, so poor, so like to stray,
Breaking Thy mandates every day !

And yet though clogged with sin I be
I fail not in Thy thought of me ;
For on my heart Thyself hast writ
Thy name and the sweet grace of it.

And on my soul Thyself canst trace
The pictured likeness of Thy face,
Clear as of old Veronica
Upon the blood-stained kerchief saw.

No true and faithful lover I,
Yet Thy poor lover till I die—
And past the gates of death and birth,
And the lost memory of the earth.

So take Thou me and, if Thou wilt,
Purge from me all my woe and guilt ;
Show me to angels standing by
Whiter than whitest purity.

See in Thy hands I lay them all—
My will that fails, my feet that fall ;
My heart that wearies everywhere,
Yet finds Thy yoke so hard to bear.

Yea, with all these my love that still
Loves—for is love not hard to kill ?—
Whose only grace it well may be
Is that it loves so worthily.

THE FLYING WHEEL

WHEN I was young the days were long,
Oh, long the days when I was young :
So long from morn to evenfall
As they would never end at all.

Now I grow old Time flies, alas !
I watch the years and seasons pass.
Time turns him with his fingers thin
A wheel that whirls while it doth spin.

There is no time to take one's ease,
For to sit still and be at peace :
Oh, whirling wheel of Time, be still,
Let me be quiet if you will !

Yet still it turns so giddily,
So fast the years and seasons fly,
Dazed with the noise and speed I run
And stay me on the Changeless One.

I stay myself on Him who stays
Ever the same through nights and days :
The One Unchangeable for aye,
That was and will be : the one Stay,

O'er whom Eternity will pass
But as an image in a glass ;
To whom a million years are nought,—
I stay myself on a great Thought.

I stay myself on the great Quiet
After the noises and the riot ;
As in a garnished chamber sit
Far from the tumult of the street.

Oh, wheel of Time, turn round apace !
But I have found a resting-place.
You will not trouble me again
In the great peace where I attain.

THE EPITAPH

WRITE on my grave when I am dead,
Whatever road I trod
That I admired and honoured
The wondrous works of God.

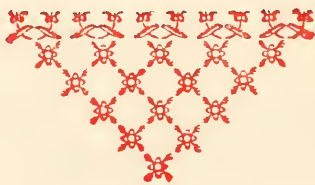
That all the days and years I had,
The greatest and the least,
Each day with grateful heart and glad
I sat me to a feast.

That not alone for body's meat
Which takes the lowest place
I gave Him grace when I did eat
And with a shining face,

But for the spirit filled and fed
That else must waste and die,
With sun and stars replenished
And dew and evening sky.

The beauty of the hills and seas
Brimmed that immortal cup ;
And when I went by fields and trees
My heart was lifted up.

Lap me in the green grass and write
Upon the daisied sod
That still I praised with all my might
The wondrous works of God.



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